

Proclamation 6249 of February 11, 1991

Save Your Vision Week, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During this "Decade of the Brain," which is dedicated to enhancing public awareness of the benefits of neuroscience research, our observance of Save Your Vision Week is particularly appropriate. Our senses—the precious gifts of sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell—link the mind to the outside world, enabling us to enjoy all the wonders of creation. As a "window" for the brain, our eyesight merits special care and protection.

Tragically, thousands of Americans suffer vision loss each year—vision loss that might have easily been prevented. One simple and highly effective way to prevent vision loss is through periodic eye examinations by a licensed professional. A thorough examination by an eye care professional can lead to early detection of eye disease and allow time for successful treatment.

Glaucoma is one potentially blinding eye disease that can be controlled and treated effectively if detected early. Regrettably, however, glaucoma remains the leading cause of blindness in older Americans because many fail to have their eyes tested for the disease before it has permanently damaged their vision. Black Americans over age 40 need to be especially vigilant, since glaucoma has been shown to affect this group more frequently and at an earlier age than it does others.

Regular eye examinations are absolutely critical for persons with diabetes. Treatment is usually available that can help those with diabetic eye disease to avoid extreme vision loss. As in the case of glaucoma, these treatments are most effective when the condition is detected early.

Children also need early and regular eye examinations. Even the healthiest of children may have an unsuspected visual problem that requires prompt attention. A routine checkup can identify such a disorder in time for effective treatment.

In addition to regular eye examinations, all of us can avoid vision loss by protecting ourselves against eye injuries. At home as well as in the workplace, one should wear a face mask, goggles, or safety glasses when working with potentially harmful chemicals or machinery. Whenever possible, athletes participating in contact sports or other potentially hazardous activities should also wear protective eyewear. Contact lens wearers should always handle and clean their lenses carefully, in accordance with the directions of their eye care professional. Finally, from an early age, children should be taught the fundamentals of eye safety—and one of the best ways we can teach them is by good example.

To encourage Americans to cherish and protect their vision, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week of March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of March 3 through March 9, 1991, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate in this observance by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives. I also encourage eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations committed to the goal of sight conservation to join in activities that make Americans more aware of the steps they can take to protect their vision.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6250 of February 14, 1991

Lithuanian Independence Day, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

From the days of Mindaugas to modern times, Lithuanians have cherished the freedom that is the common inheritance of all mankind. Thus, on February 16, 1918, when they realized their long-denied dream of independence, the people of Lithuania celebrated the renewal of a centuries-old national tradition and the promise of a future free from foreign domination.

Tragically, however, Lithuania's independence was short-lived. Under secret protocols to the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, signed by the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in 1939, the independent Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were consigned to foreign occupation and conquest. In June 1940, less than 1 year later, Red Army troops invaded Lithuania and its neighbors, effectively annexing those nations to the Soviet Union.

The United States has never recognized the forcible incorporation of Lithuania and the other Baltic States into the U.S.S.R., and we have consistently supported the Baltic peoples' right to determine and control their own future. On this 73rd anniversary of Lithuanian independence, we reaffirm our support for the just aspirations of the Lithuanian people. Their current struggle to assert their legitimate rights through the peaceful efforts of democratically elected representatives compels our sympathy and support.

The Lithuanian people have used the democratic process in what they hoped would be a peaceful, disciplined effort to gain recognition of their right to independence. Soviet authorities responded in January with the use of force, killing at least 20 people and injuring hundreds of others. The United States has condemned as inexcusable that action against a peaceful and democratically elected government, and we have called on the Soviets to eschew further use of intimidation and violence in the Baltic States. We urge the Soviets to pursue constructive negotiations with the elected representatives of the Lithuanian